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# THE EUROPEAN POLITICAL CAPITAL OF PORTUGUESE

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# THE EUROPEAN POLITICAL CAPITAL OF PORTUGUESE

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*‘What know they of Portugal who only Portugal know,  
- with apologies to Rudyard Kipling writing on England -*

# Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ..... 7

INTRODUCTION..... 11

PORTUGUESE AS SUPRA-NATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS..... 13

PORTUGUESE CIVIL SERVANTS IN BRUSSELS..... 34

PORTUGUESE WORKING IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT..... 44

INCREASING PORTUGAL’S EUROPEAN POLITICAL CAPITAL.... 54



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To participate in the multi-level system of government in which Portugal is now embedded (Teixeira and Pinto, 2012) requires European political capital as well as national political capital. European political capital is the knowledge required to deal effectively with the complex institutions that make the decisions of European Union. It consists of a mixture of the political skills, knowledge and experience that individuals can acquire by working in Brussels. For Portuguese it requires working with foreigners in a foreign language. It is an asset that qualifies people to be part of the EU decision making game. European political capital does not guarantee influence, but without it people will be on the sidelines rather than players in the Brussels policy community. To ensure that decisions that Portuguese agree to in Brussels will be accepted by the Portuguese government requires national as well as European political capital.

While all politics is about expressing different points of view and negotiating to arrive at mutually agreed decisions, EU politics is different in that bargaining takes place among multi-national groups. Three Brussels institutions are critical in giving Portuguese the opportunity to acquire and make use of European political capital: the European Commission, the Brussels office of the Permanent Representative (PERMREP) of the Portuguese state; and the European Parliament. The first of these institutions has a de-nationalizing effect, since Commission staff are meant to give their first loyalty to the goals and priority of the European Union itself. The PERMREP's Office and the European Parliament have a multi-nationalizing effect, since agreements made with the participation of Portuguese must also have the approval of representatives of more than a score of member states.

As EU citizens, Portuguese are eligible to become *supra-national civil servants in the European Commission*. Its staff is often described as faceless bureaucrats; while they are usually anonymous they are not bureaucrats. Commission officials are active participants in the policy process with the exclusive right to initiate the legislative proposals and directives that go to the European Parliament and the Council for approval. They also monitor how member states implement decisions taken at the EU level.

To be competitive in seeking a Commission post requires good general intelligence; knowledge of English and French, the working languages of the Commission; and the ability to work as part of a very multi-national team. The Europe-wide competition for posts is brutal: less than 1 percent

of applicants are offered a job. In a meritocratic recruitment process that assesses applicants without regard to nationality, 24 Portuguese succeeded in getting a post in the latest recruitment round. They were 10 percent of all successful applicants. Portuguese are relatively well represented in Commission posts dealing with policy, holding 3.0 percent of posts, almost one-third more than Portugals share of the EUs population. Because of the influx of Portuguese recruits in the 1980s after the country joined the EU, a disproportionate number of Portuguese are now in very high-level posts within the Commission.

The Commission's work has a de-nationalizing effect. Whatever the specifics of a post, the people with whom a Portuguese works on a daily basis are from more than half a dozen nationalities. Deliberations will not be conducted in Portuguese but a foreign language. Within the EU's hierarchical structure, the dossiers on which a Portuguese works are reviewed by multi-national superiors and committees and require endorsement by Councils consisting of representatives of national governments and of multi-national Party Groups in the European Parliament.

Portuguese diplomats and domestic civil servants represent the Portuguese government in the *Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER)*. It is responsible for evaluating the many technical proposals that come from the Commission for approval and for identifying those contentious issues that can only be settled by the Council of Ministers. Since COREPER represents states, each country has a right to participate in all its deliberations without regard to its population.

Portugal's PERMREP office has about 60 professional staff, a mixture of mid-career diplomats and domestic civil servants seconded from Lisbon ministries. The latter are required because they have specific technical knowledge necessary to evaluate the substantive effect of many narrowly focussed EU proposals. In addition, there are continuing consultations between the Brussels Office and Lisbon ministries about features in Commission proposals of particular interest to Portugal and about how these can be combined with interests of other governments whose support will be needed to form a coalition to advance these interests. The unitary nature of the Portuguese state makes this process easier than in a federal country such as Germany, where domestic territorial interests are important, and than in countries with coalition governments in which many parties require consultation or the government itself is divided about Europe, as is the case in the United Kingdom.

More than 700 Portuguese participate as members of multi-national Expert Groups that consider Commission proposals in terms of their administrative feasibility in national contexts. Five-sixths are civil servants from Lisbon ministries; the remainder represent stakeholder interests of civil society institutions or have individual professional expertise. There is little numerical difference between the number participating from countries the size of Portugal and countries such as Germany or Italy. As the name suggests, participants need national political capital in order to evaluate how to apply broadly phrased EU directives in a Portuguese context. But they also need European political capital in order to secure modifications in proposed directives so that they can be better suited to Portuguese circumstances.

Portuguese civil servants can become temporary staff members of the European Commission by qualifying for posts as Seconded National Experts. During their short-term appointments of six months to four years, Portuguese officials must put European considerations first. On returning to their Lisbon ministry, they can use the political capital gained in Brussels to advance Portuguese policies.

By contrast with the Commission, the *European Parliament* gives priority to partisan values and interests. MEPs must deal with issues in the light of trans-national values, for example, social democracy or the environment, rather than national priorities. Since nationally elected MEPs are organised in multi-national Party Groups, everyone working in the EP requires European political capital with a capital P. The 751 MEPs are the most visible part of the Parliament, but they are the fewest in number. Slightly more numerous are the assistants that each MEP employs with parliamentary funding. On average Portuguese MEPs have three staff assistants, with some working in the Brussels office of their MEP and others are based in a city in Portugal relevant to the MEP's political base. The largest proportion of EP employees are career civil servants who support the collective work of the Parliament and its many committees.

Collectively, the number of Portuguese working for the parliament in one or another capacity is 16 times greater than Portugal's 22 MEPs. Portuguese are 4.2 percent of this permanent staff, almost double their share of the EU's population; they are also over-represented among new recruits. Over a decade the number who have acquired European political capital in the Parliament is greater than those gaining experience in the Commission, because of the high turnover of MEPs and their assistants by the end of each five-year electoral cycle.



*Recommendations.* To make the most of participation in the multi-national institutions of the European Union, Portugal needs to increase the pool of citizens having European political capital, since a series of enlargements begun in 2004 means that the EU now has 28 member states compared with 12 when Portugal joined in 1986. Actions that the Portuguese government can take to increase this stock are set out at the end of the following chapters. They include:

- \* The Portuguese Ministry of Education should increase the percentage of pupils gaining effective use of two major European languages, e.g. English, French, and German.
- \* The Portuguese government should offer grants to encourage temporary posting abroad of able individuals working in the public, private and civil society sectors to gain experience of working on common problems in a multi-national context.
- \* In recruiting domestic civil servants, more weight should be given to knowledge of EU working languages and experience of studying or working abroad.
- \* Able domestic civil servants in post should be given experience of multi-national settings by temporary assignment to Portuguese embassies and organisations abroad.

Portugal has the human resources to contribute to the cadres of Europeans with the skills and knowledge to participate in trans-national policymaking. However, in a European Union of 500 million people Portuguese will always be a small portion of those holding posts in Brussels. That requires an active policy to promote an increase in the European political capital of Portuguese.

# INTRODUCTION

Of all the international institutions to which Portugal belongs, the European Union is unique in its powers and in the direct impact that it has on the politics and economy of Portugal (cf. Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Piattoni, 2010). Since Portuguese constitute only 2 percent of the EU's citizens, Portuguese voices are a small part of a multi-national choir found in EU committees of member states, the European Parliament and the European Commission.

In order to represent Portugal to best effect in Brussels, Portugal needs a pool of people with *European political capital*, that is, the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to understand the complex procedures by which decisions are arrived at in EU institutions that also include representatives of 27 national governments and supra-national EU officials. In order for Portuguese institutions to accept multi-national decisions, its representatives in Brussels must also have national political capital. This is needed to convince colleagues in Lisbon that whatever EU decision is arrived at is the best that Portuguese could obtain in circumstances in which it was but one voice among more than two dozen.

Because Portuguese citizens are automatically EU citizens too, they are eligible to become a supra-national civil servant in the European Commission or one of many smaller EU agencies. EU officials are expected to put their European citizenship first and act as guardians of the powers granted by treaties of the European Union and to promote the policies of the particular agency to which they belong. It is the responsibility of a combination of Portuguese diplomats and domestic civil servants in the Permanent Representative (PERMREP) Office in Brussels to represent the Portuguese government on a day to day basis in the multiple deliberations of the EU. Cabinet ministers attend multi-national meetings of the EU's Council in order to deal with differences of opinion that are politically too hot to be resolved by negotiations between civil servants.

To be effective, Portuguese ministers need enough European political capital to adapt what they say in Lisbon to the requirements of a multi-national decisionmaking body. Portugal's Members of the European Parliament (MEP) require national political capital to be elected to the European Parliament and European political capital in order to participate effectively in the activities of a multi-national Parliament (cf. Corbett et al., 2010; Trechsel et al., 2013). In the former role they are accountable to a section

of the Portuguese electorate. By contrast, each MEP belongs to a Party Group that has members elected from as many as 28 member states. Whereas Portuguese voters want their MEPs to represent their national interests in the EP, Party Groups expect their MEPs to vote in accord with decisions taken by multi-national caucuses in which Portuguese members are few. When votes are taken in the European Parliament, Group views normally prevail over national views (see e.g. Hix and Hoyland, 2011; Rose and Borz, 2013).

The pool of Portuguese with European political capital consists of a floating population of fish, that is, people for whom working in Brussels is but one stage in a lengthy career. To enter the pool they must have sufficient motivation and skills to gain employment there. Only the supra-national civil servants in the Commission have a permanent job in Brussels. A person who switches from being a national Cabinet minister to being an EU Commissioner is appointed to serve for only five years. National officials spend no more than six years as members of the PERMREP's staff in Brussels before returning to a national ministry in Lisbon or, if a diplomat, being assigned to a post in another country or continent. About half of Portugal's MEPs change after every quinquennial election, and the turnover of their staffs is even greater. Since European political capital is a fungible asset, people can take their knowledge with them if they leave a job in Brussels. It is an asset that can be used in dealing with issues that arise in their next job, whether in the public or the private sector. This is most evident when a person becomes a lobbyist.

Changes in the EU since Portugal joined makes it desirable to increase the number of citizens knowing how to work in an EU as well as a national political setting. In 1986 Portugal was one of twelve member states; rounds of enlargement since have more than doubled the membership to 28 states. Even though many are less populous and have more economic problems than Portugal, every member state can claim equality in participation in EU deliberations. A Portuguese representative wanting to speak in a meeting is now competing with more than two dozen other voices. If Portugal is to maintain the same presence in EU deliberations, it must do more than maintain its stock of European political capital; it must be increased. The succeeding chapters show how Portugal stands in three main institutions of the EU, the Commission, the Permanent Representative's Office and the European Parliament. It concludes by making recommendations about actions that the Portuguese government could take to increase its pool of European political capital.

## PORTUGUESE AS SUPRA-NATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS

*The Commission.* Commissioners are the public political face of the Europe Commission; each heads a Directorate General responsible for a specific bloc of policies. While each country has the right to nominate one person to a post as Commissioner, they are meant to be supra-national politicians promoting the collective interests of EU institutions. When Jose Manuel Barroso became President of the Commission this ensured that a Portuguese voice would be heard at the top level, even if speaking English or French. In his current post, Barroso is not acting as a Portuguese citizen but as a European citizen speaking in the name of 28 member states and 500 million Europeans. This temporary public relations advantage will disappear with the new Commission confirmed in autumn, 2014. Moreover, the expansion of the EU threatens the traditional practice of giving every member state the right to nominate one Commissioner. Although there is now a formal commitment to reduce the number of Commissioners by one-third, protests from small states have led to the suspension of implementation. Thus, Portuguese will have one member of the Commission established after the 2014 European Parliament election.

In the early decades of the EU, the tasks of Commissioners was much lighter than today and some Commissioners sought to use their Brussels post as a springboard for returning to a high level national political post. This was reflected in their appointment of a *cabinet* of fellow-nationals who could promote their own careers back home. On becoming President of the Commission, Romano Prodi decreed that all *cabinets* had to consist of at least three different nationalities; the head or deputy head had to be of a different nationality than the Commissioner; and at least three of its approximately half a dozen members must be selected from the ranks of Commission civil servants. Concurrently, the growth in the policy responsibilities of each Commissioner has encouraged each *cabinet* to concentrate on EU issues for

Only one-quarter of Commissioners have a Portuguese national in their cabinet

which their Commissioner is responsible. Limited attention is now given to links with the Commissioner's country of origin (Kassim et al., 2013: 197ff). For example, half the members of the *cabinet* of Jose Manuel Barroso, the President of the Commission, are not Portuguese. Notwithstanding the responsibility of each *cabinet* to manage relations between their Commissioner and the Presidency, only one-quarter of Commissioners have a Portuguese national in their *cabinet*.

Commission civil servants are hundreds of times more numerous than Commissioners and their *cabinets*. They are distinct among supra-national civil servants in being a part of an institution with many of the powers of the executive branch of national governments (cf. Trondal, 2010: 124). To describe Commission staff as 'faceless eurocrats' is a misleading half truth. They are faceless in the sense of not being well known publicly. However, they are not bureaucrats, for Commission staff do not directly administer the great majority of the EU's programmes; this task is delegated to bureaucrats in member states or to specialised EU agencies. Hundreds of staff are regularly engaged in formulating policies. They collect information about current problems that the EU can address; they consider the constellation of national, partisan and interest group views concerning action; and initiate legislative proposals for the European Parliament and Council to act upon. While the great majority of these proposals are relatively narrow in scope and impact, collectively they constitute a substantial portion of the annual policy outputs of the EU.

The expansion of the EU's powers and membership has led to the size of its staff increasing by 15 times. When the Commission was established in 1957, it was expected to need no more than 2,000 officials to act on behalf of what were then six member states. At the time of Portugal's entry in 1986, the number of member states had doubled while the number of Commission staff had quadrupled. After the EU expanded to 15 member states in the 1990s, the size of the staff again more than doubled. Since the EU has almost doubled in member states since 2004 and in powers too, the

Commission's staff has increased to more than 32,000 (Key Figures, 2013).

As citizens of the European Union, all Portuguese can apply for a post with the European Commission. While Commission staff must take the views of national governments into account, they are not subordinate to national governments. Moreover, even though the EU's co-decision process requires the Council and the Parliament to approve legislation, the Commission has the monopoly on initiating legislation. In the words of the President of the Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso (2006: 6):

*The Commission has a unique and historical mission to be more than just a civil service. It is there to speak up for European ideals and values, to take action to support those values, and to defend the European interest.*

**Formal and informal requirements for becoming an EU civil servant.** The first responsibility of the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO: [www.epso.europa.eu](http://www.epso.europa.eu)) is to make merit rather than national and partisan patronage, the chief criterion for the appointment of staff. It seeks to do so by making transparent the qualifications required for EU posts and the steps that individuals must take to secure a post. The tens of thousands applying for posts each year are screened through a series of written tests and tests of language competence, and then for the ability to work as part of a multinational team. Exceptions to rules against favouring nationalities arise when a new member state is admitted. Since enlargement tends to increase the number of Commission posts, a significant number of new places are temporarily earmarked for recruits from new member states; this is especially the case for translators. Appointments received in this way may be converted into permanent Commission posts without going through the full competition. Portugal was a beneficiary of this policy when it joined the EU in 1986 and more than a dozen countries have benefited since.

Because the EU is formally committed to respecting the use of all the national languages of member states, an ability to work in a foreign language is an essential requirement

to apply for a Commission post. The working languages of the EU are effectively French and English. At a minimum Portuguese who wish to qualify for an EC post should normally have a knowledge of both these languages; German is also gaining recognition as a third working language.

The 2012 Eurobarometer survey of the language competence of adults found that Portugal ranks near the bottom of European states

Because Portuguese is not a widely used language in Europe, there is a structural incentive for citizens to learn at least one foreign language. However, the 2012 Eurobarometer survey of the language competence of adults found that Portugal ranks near the bottom of European states (Table 1.1). Forty-one percent of Portuguese adults reported that they could not carry on a conversation in a foreign language, a proportion exceeded only by Italy and Hungary. The foreign languages that Portuguese most often claim to know are English, 27 percent; French, 15 percent; and Spanish, 10 percent. Only 1 percent say that they understand German, the third most important language in Brussels. The ability to converse in English is more than one-quarter below the EU average of 38 percent. Moreover, the percentage of Portuguese adults reporting knowledge of two foreign languages is only 13 percent, barely half the average for EU countries. This low level is matched only by Hungary and the United Kingdom. Among Portuguese graduates, the pattern is much different, since getting a good degree can require young Portuguese to have a working knowledge of at least one foreign language.

Table 1.1 Knowledge of Foreign Languages

	Portugal	Austria	Belgium	Czech	Hungary	All
	(Percent reporting ability to converse)					
Two or more	13	27	50	22	13	25
One	46	51	22	27	22	29
None	41	22	28	51	65	46

Source: Special Eurobarometer Survey No. 386, 2012.

A university degree is required to apply for an EU post and 27 percent of Portuguese in the age bracket most relevant for EC recruitment, 30 to 34, have completed a university degree. Whilst this is below the EU average of 38 percent, it

is large enough to provide a pool of young Portuguese meeting this essential requirement. Notwithstanding the importance of preparing legal instruments in the work of the Commission, there are no restrictions on the field of study at University. A survey of Commission officials concludes, 'The educational background of officials in the organization is impressively diverse' (Kassim et al., 2013: 40). The European Union Commission in Question (EUCIQ)<sup>1</sup> survey of Commission staff at the policymaking level found that 28 percent had degrees in business or economics; 24 percent in law; 25 percent in science and maths; 15 percent in the social sciences, including political studies and international relations; and 8 percent in other fields. The variety of academic backgrounds and the small proportion concentrating in politics and international relations rejects the idea that the Commission simply recruits 'clones of itself' (Kassim et al., 2013: 258). Portuguese staff are distinctive in that 47 percent have degrees in business studies or economics. Given the importance of economic issues in the EU since the 2008 eurozone crisis, this distinctive feature of Portuguese staff is especially noteworthy.

While still at university, students can take the first step toward gaining the political capital required to work in a foreign language by studying abroad. A majority of European Commission officials have studied abroad and more than one-third have done so for a year or more (Kassim et al., 2013: 258 ff). Portuguese students are more than half again as likely to study abroad as are European students generally (Figure 1.1). By comparison with young people in countries of similar population size, Portuguese are more

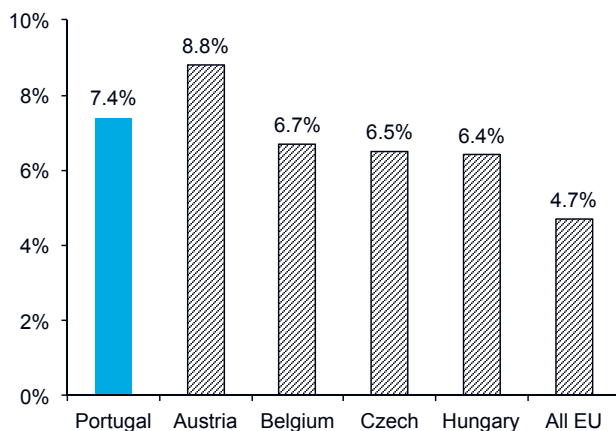
Portuguese students are more than half again as likely to study abroad as are European students generally

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1. The EUCIQ survey was conducted by a multi-national academic team of Hussein Kassim, John Peter, Michael W. Bauer, Sara Connolly, Renaud Dehousse, Liesbet Hooghe and Andrew Thompson and facilitated but not controlled by the European Commission. A total of 1,901 administrators and cabinet members were interviewed, including 60 Portuguese, many at the senior level. Online and elite interviews were also conducted. Full details are available in Kassim et al., (2013: 10ff). When its survey data is cited without reference to page numbers in the study's book, they have been specially calculated for this report by its published account. Elements of the data base will be available for academic use as of January, 2014.



likely to be Erasmus students than are Belgians, Czechs or Hungarians and are not far behind Austrians, who have the linguistic and geographical advantages of easy access to German universities. Moreover, the absolute number is large of Portuguese students taking advantage of EU programmes promoting student mobility. In the 2011-12 academic year, 5,269 Portuguese were Erasmus scholars at another European university and the average duration of study was almost six months. An additional 1,215 were in company placements with enterprises elsewhere in Europe. Spain is the most popular destination attracting 24 percent of Portuguese Erasmus students; Italy comes second with 13 percent. Poland and the Czech Republic, which offer a low cost of living and some course in English, attract one-sixth of Portuguese students. By contrast, only 5 percent of Portuguese going abroad study in Germany, and fewer still in France or the United Kingdom. The choice of destinations is a reminder that the motives encouraging Portuguese to study abroad are varied and the social skills gained are diffuse rather than specific to European political capital (<http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/1011>).

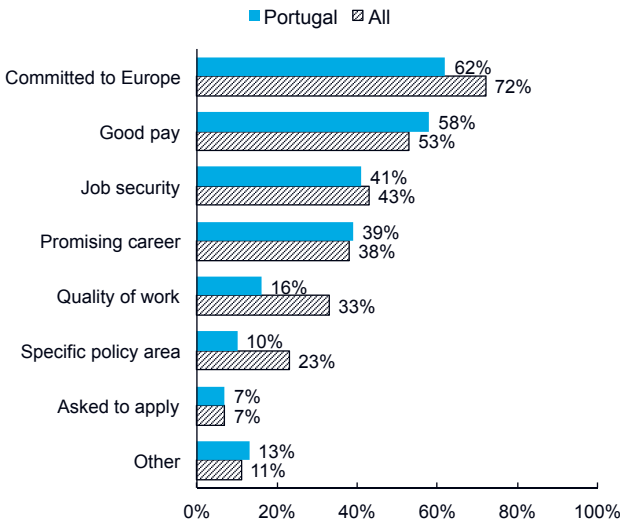
Figure 1.1 Erasmus Students as Percent of Graduates



Source: Erasmus: Facts, Figures & Trends. Brussels: DG Education and Training, 2011-12.

Given the time and effort required to gain a Commission post, a lot of motivation is required to succeed. One set of attractions is common to jobs in many fields: a job in the Commission offers good pay, especially to people from Southern and Eastern Europe, and it also offers a secure job. A very different attraction is political: a commitment to Europe as an ideal and an interest in the policymaking role of the Commission in many different areas (Figure 1.2). Among Portuguese officials, three in five were motivated by a political commitment to Europe. A similarly large number were economically motivated: the pay and job security compared very favourably with what could be obtained in Portugal. The promise of a good career with high quality work, whether defined by the policy area or the challenges of multi-national institutions, came third. The emphasis on material considerations among staff recruited well before the 2008 economic crisis implies that while Portuguese working in the Commission tend to be committed to the EU's political goals, pragmatic economic calculations are equally important.

Figure 1.2 Reasons for Choosing a Career in the Commission



While Portuguese working in the Commission tend to be committed to the EU's political goals, pragmatic economic calculations are equally important.

Source: EUCIQ, 2008. See Kassim et al., 2013: p 54ff.

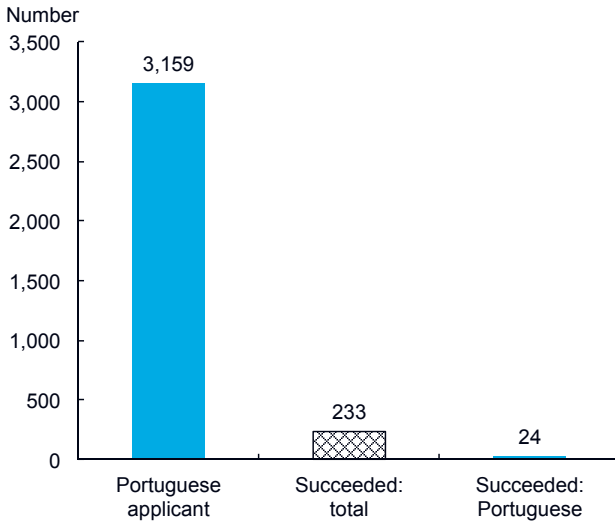
To attract talented people with the appropriate mix of motivations and to discourage people looking for a safe job, the information given applicants emphasizes what is distinctive about working for the Commission. It makes use of new social media such as Linked In and Facebook to circulate videos. Viewers are meant to ask themselves: Is a job in Brussels what I would really like and be qualified for? It encourages successful recruits to give talks about what they do to groups of potential applicants. A recurring theme is that an EU job, by contrast with working in the national civil service, involves working with people from many different nationalities and working for multi-national rather than national interests.

**Success in the concours.** Competition for EU jobs is brutal. In 2012 there were 45,356 applicants for a career job as an administrator in the Commission. The number of Portuguese applying, 3,159, was 7.0 percent, more than three times the country's share of the EU population. EPSOS initially screens the tens of thousands of applicants by ensuring that they meet formal requirements for eligibility such as citizenship. This is followed by computerized examinations in the main language of applicants and in French, English or German as a second language. Tests of verbal, numerical and abstract reasoning; and judgment in problematic situations are administered in more than 60 cities of the European Union and outside Europe where a significant number of eligible candidates are present (see [www.epso-training.eu](http://www.epso-training.eu)).

Less than 2 percent of applicants are short-listed for a detailed assessment in the final stage of the *concours* (Figure 1.3). Finalists are assessed by a series of individual and group competence tests intended to simulate actual working conditions in EU posts; an oral presentation and a structured interview. The number appointed varies slightly from year to year. In 2012 there were 233 laureates placed on the reserve list of persons qualified for an administrative job. Given Portugal's population and the small number of permanent posts available each year, only a handful of Portuguese can hope to win a position. In 2012, there were 24 Portuguese laureates. While low in absolute numbers, Portuguese were more than one-

tenth of successful competitors in the *concours*. However, they were less than 1 percent of all Portuguese who applied for a Commission post.

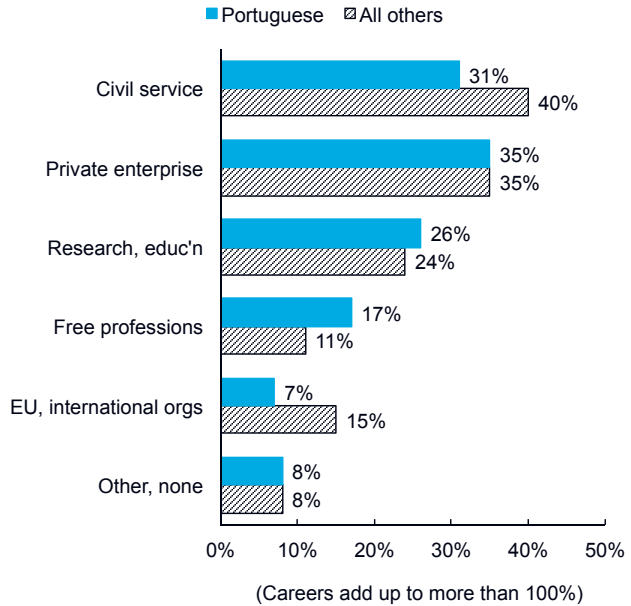
Figure 1.3 Competition for Commission Posts



Source: European Personnel Selection Office: 2012 data for administrative posts

Successful candidates are placed on a list of people eligible to be appointed to a job in a specific DG or related EU institution. Laureates monitor the stream of posts announced and apply for posts that meet their interests and skills. The process of actually finding a specific post used to take up to 18 months for those selected as eligible to be employed in an EU institution. The time has now been reduced to just under a year. It nonetheless remains long enough so that up to one-sixth of those successful in the competition do not take up employment with the Commission, remaining in the job they held while competing for an EU post or finding a preferred post elsewhere. In either case, their non-EU job will make good use of the European political capital that they had amassed in order to be successful in the *concours*. (Key Statistics, 2013; Kassim et al., 2013: 59).

Figure 1.4 Previous Careers of Commission Staff



Source: European Union Commission in Question, 2008.

By contrast with jobs that follow directly from university studies in law and medicine, new graduates cannot expect to win a post in the European Commission immediately on completing their academic course. The time and effort required to succeed in the *concours* results in the average recruit not securing a job until age 30 or above. The job or jobs held meanwhile not only provide an income but also add to their political capital nationally, at the European level, or both. In the diversity of their work experience, Portuguese are much like Commission officials of other nationalities (Figure 1.4; Kassim et al., 2013: 43). Almost all previously worked in private sector enterprises or the professions, areas where the Single Europe Market has had a major immediate impact. Two-fifths were national civil servants prior to taking a post in Brussels. Education and research posts occupied about one-quarter of officials prior to joining the Commission. By contrast, relatively few have transferred from other EU agencies or from other international bodies. Those who began their post-university career

working for political parties, trade unions or other civil society organisations have little inclination to seek and gain a post in the Commission. The European Parliament offers many jobs suitable for such interests.

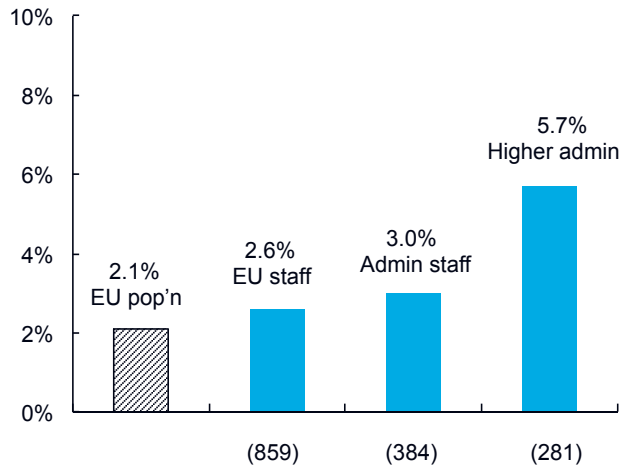
In addition, the European Commission offers young graduates about 1,400 paid posts as a *stagiaire* (intern) open to competition on a Europe-wide basis ([ec.europa.eu/stags/about](http://ec.europa.eu/stags/about)). These short-term posts of five months do not carry any promise of future employment in the EU, but they do give interns a basic stock of European political capital. While few Portuguese stagiaires subsequently gain a Commission post, the knowledge acquired is an asset when searching for jobs as lawyers, economists or administrators in Portugal, Brussels or major organisations elsewhere. In October, 2013 there were 18,707 applications for stagiaire posts in the Commission, of which 2,491 came from Portugal. Of this number, 23 were successful. While this was 3.4 percent of the total receiving internships in the autumn competition, it was less than 1 percent of Portuguese applicants. Thus, the very strong encouragement given young Portuguese to apply not only helped to win a disproportionate number of posts but also boosted disappointment among the 99 percent of Portuguese candidates who were unsuccessful. By contrast, among the almost equal number of Spanish who applied for stagiaire posts, more than twice as many, 59, were successful. Far fewer Swedes than Portuguese applied, but this more selective approach resulted in one of eight Swedes being successful ([https://ec.europa.eu/stages/online/cv/application\\_statistics.cfm](https://ec.europa.eu/stages/online/cv/application_statistics.cfm))

To gain flexibility and to meet ad hoc personnel needs, for example, for Information Technology specialists, the EU also employs some administrators on fixed-term contracts of three years, and renewable once. The selection procedure is not so complex and there is greater emphasis on very specific skills. There are also temporary contract posts in such specialised fields as scientific research; appointments are made by the agency offering the job. In 2012 there were 5,919 EU staff employed on temporary contracts at the administrative grade or its equivalent, increasing that staff by one-quarter. There is also provision for hiring consul-

tants through competitive tender and a data base of EU recognised experts eligible to receive temporary work for specific tasks.

Figure 1.5 Disproportionate Number of Portuguese in EC Posts

At the Administrative Grade, where policy decisions are made and implemented, Portuguese are over-represented, filling 3.0 percent of such posts



Source: DG Human Resources and Security, Statistical Bulletin, 2013.  
Senior administrative grades are points 11 to 16.

The career paths of officials constituting the *cabinet* of the Commission President, Jose Manuel Barroso, illustrate the varied routes that lead people to Brussels. Barroso himself had studied in Switzerland and the United States, taught law in Lisbon, been a member of the Portuguese Parliament and government, and active in the European People's Party before becoming head of the Commission. The German Chief of the *cabinet* was an academic and practising lawyer before moving to Brussels. The Deputy Chief, Hugo Sobral, graduated in international relations and then became a Portuguese diplomat specially in EU affairs before joining the Barroso *cabinet* in 2009. Similarly, the senior economic advisor, Antonio José Cabral, was an academic economist and Portuguese civil servant before becoming a Commission economist in 1988. The other ten cabinet members have similarly mixed experience of national, European and academic institutions. Their nationalities

are Austrian, Belgian, British, Dutch, German, Italian and Polish, as well as Portuguese.

In the Commission staff of more than 32,000, Portuguese hold 859 posts, 2.6 percent of the total. Portuguese are a higher proportion of total staff than long-standing member countries where living standards are much higher, such as Austria, Finland and Sweden. They are also better represented than in new member states such as the Czech Republic and Hungary (Statistical Bulletin, 2013). A limited portion of total staff are at the Administrative Grade, where policy decisions are made and implemented. In this category, Portuguese are over-represented, filling 3.0 percent of such posts (Figure 1.5) and more numerous than citizens of countries such as Austria and Sweden. Even though the absolute number of administrative employees in the most populous EU countries is greater than Portugal, all are relatively under-represented in proportion to their share of the EU's population. This reflects the EU's readiness to prevent smaller states from being swamped by citizens of states up to ten times as populous as the median member state.

The over-representation of Portuguese in the Commission is even more striking in the higher administrative grades. Whereas only 5 percent of Commission posts are at the highest grades of 14 to 16, among Portuguese 7 percent work at this level. Whereas those working at the second highest level, grades, 11 to 13, are less than two in five of administrative staff, two-thirds of Portuguese in the Commission are working at this level. Thus, Portuguese constitute 5.7 percent of the higher-grade Commission administrators (Figure 1.4). Reciprocally, Portuguese tend to be less represented at the lower and entry levels of administrative staff.

EU policy opposes gender discrimination in staffing. In the Commission's total administrative staff, 59 percent are men and 41 percent women. The proportions are very similar for Portuguese: 57 percent are men and 43 percent women. However, there are significant signs of change. At the entry level grades of 5 to 7, women are 55 percent of these newer recruits as against 45 percent male. However, among Portuguese three in five in the entry level administrative grades are men (Statistical Bulletin, 2013).



Whereas partisanship is the basis of recruiting MEPs and organising the work of the European Parliament, the Commission operates differently. The priority of the EU's supra-national principles does not exclude individuals having political values that are normally developed before becoming EU employees. The critical analytic question is whether the political values tend to be representative of the range of political values in Europe as a whole.

To ascertain economic outlooks, the EUCIQ survey asked Commission staff: *People often think of themselves in terms of their personal philosophical stance on economic issues. Some favour an active role for government on economic policy questions. Others look primarily to markets. Where would you place yourself in terms of economic philosophy on a scale from 0 (a greater role for government to 5 (centrist) to 10 (a greater role for markets)?* This choice of words avoided the ambiguity of the terms left and right. The mean score for all respondents was 5.5, very close to the central point of the scale and there was a normal distribution around the centre. The mean score for Portuguese respondents was marginally closer, 5.4, virtually the same as that of Austrians and Belgians, and slightly less pro-market than Czechs and Hungarians reacting against their past experience of a state-controlled economy. Although the economic values mentioned have clear partisan implications, a big majority of officials said that partisan views are of little importance in their work.

In the words of one respondent:

*Am I here to pursue the agenda of one political party? That's clearly not relevant. Am I here to focus on the president's agenda? Yes, then that is very high on my priorities list. And does the president have political convictions? Does he belong to a political party? Yes, he does. But this is not my agenda. This is my political master's agenda (Kassim et al., 2013: 99).*

Since Commissioners tend to change every five years, a Commission civil servant must be sufficiently open-minded in their economic outlook to adapt to different political agendas.

Historically European countries have been characterized by major differences in social and cultural values between conservatives and liberals. Inglehart (1997) has theorized that liberal values are part of a 'post-modern' outlook of people with higher education and cosmopolitan contacts with people from different countries. These characteristics are widespread among Commission staff. The EUCIQ survey assessed these values by asking: People often think of themselves in terms of their personal philosophical stance on social and cultural issues. Many people who consider themselves to be liberal tend to favour expanded personal freedom on, for example, abortion, same-sex marriage and so on. People on the conservative side tend to favour more traditional notions of family, morality and order. Where would you place yourself in terms of social-cultural philosophy on a scale ranging from 0 (more liberal) to 10 (more conservative)? Among Commission staff, the mean score, 3.7 is at the liberal end of the scale, and 64 percent take a position on the liberal end of the scale. The mean score for Portuguese staff, 3.9, is very close to the Commission mean. It is slightly less liberal than that for Austrians and slightly more so than for Hungarians. In all these countries there is a normal distribution of opinion around the liberal mean.

### *The denationalizing effect of Commission work*

Individuals do not work for the EU in general. Instead, staff are appointed to a specific post within one of the two dozen Directorate Generals (DGs), each of which has a different Commissioner. The Washington maxim-- *Where you stand depends on where you sit*--emphasizes that what an individual official does is much affected by the organization in which they work. For example, budget officials tend to oppose increases in public spending, while those in an agriculture ministry advocate spending to support farm prices. This proposition is equally relevant in Brussels.

The Commission has more than twice as many Directorates as Portugal has ministries. Since the total number of Commission civil servants is much smaller than that of member states, the median DG has less than 700 employees. Given its population, Portugal could expect to have about 16

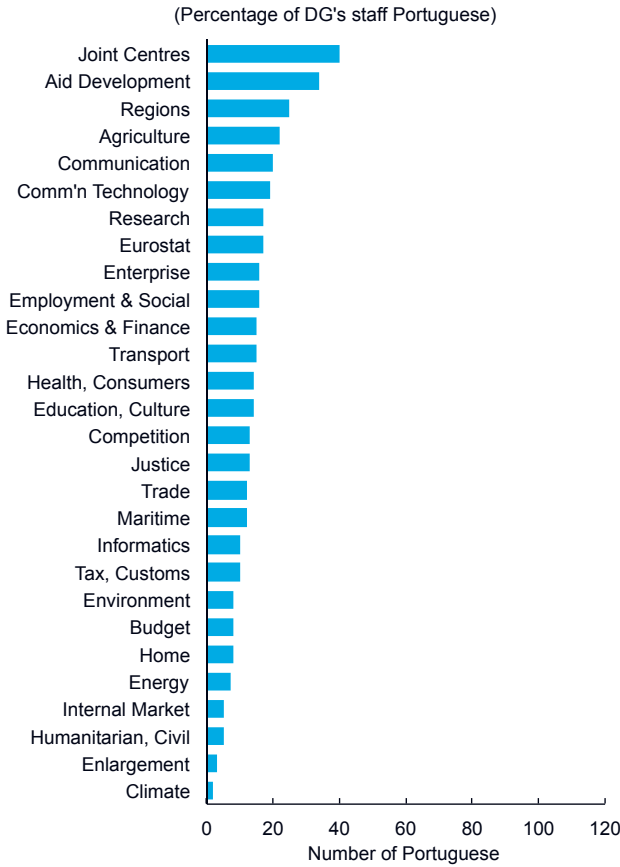
citizens in the average DG. Eight DGs have more Portuguese than this and 18 have fewer (Figure 1.6). Of the DGs where Portuguese are more numerous, Agriculture and Regional Policy are important because they disburse large amounts of EU funds from which Portugal benefits. In the Economics & Finance DG, which has a special responsibility for monitoring whether Portugal is meeting its eurozone commitments related to receiving financial aid, Portugal has 15 staff. In more than one-quarter of departments there are less than ten Portuguese. DGs vary in total staff size; thus, even though there are only 12 Portuguese in the DG dealing with Maritime Affairs and Fishing, they constitute 4 percent of its staff. Portugal's historically limited research capacity is reflected in the fact that even though its share of staff in this well-funded DG is one-third below its share of population. Whether Portuguese are over or under-represented in a Commission DG, in absolute terms Portuguese are few in each of the many Brussels buildings in which EC policies are drafted.

The work of Commission officials is immediately determined by the specific terms of reference of their job within a DG rather than by their nationality or party preference (Kassim et al., 2013: 48ff). A Portuguese working in a DG concerned with rail transport will have little occasion to deal with problems of immediate relevance to Portugal. By contrast, a Portuguese in a DG concerned with fishing may be asked to contribute his or her national knowledge to a discussion, insofar as knowledge of national circumstances is relevant to multi-national decisions. Yet even though a Portuguese diplomat seconded to serve for a period in the European External Action Service (EEAS) retains a permanent job as a Portuguese civil servant, for the duration of his or her EEAS employment the diplomat is expected to represent the European Union as a whole rather than Portugal.

Each DG is subdivided into a range of directorates, each further subdivided into more specialized units and sometimes sub-units. It is the units within a DG that are the first movers of a formal policy proposal before it is scrutinized at higher levels. While the text of a unit's proposal can be altered, as long as it shows awareness of the multi-national

politics of the EU co-decision process, it is rarely rejected in its entirety. The initial text is of particular importance to states such as Portugal, because it lacks the political weight of a large state that can quash Commission proposals that it dislikes (Rose, Corona and Trechsel, 2013).

Figure 1.6 Portuguese in Commission Directorates



Source: Key Statistics. Lesser service agencies omitted. Because of its exceptional character, the DG for Interpretation and Translation is not in the above figure.

The multi-national character of the European Commission adds a corollary to Miles's law: *Where you stand also depends upon who you sit next to*. For a Portuguese, it is

rarely another Portuguese. The combination of numerous DGs and the division of posts among citizens of 28 member states means that no DG is staffed predominantly by citizens from a single member state. For example, there are only 65 Germans in the Economics & Finance DG and 85 French in Agriculture. Thus, anyone moving from a job in a national ministry in Lisbon to a DG dealing with similar problems experiences a radical shift in their work environment. He or she is no longer sitting with fellow Portuguese but with Europeans from 27 other countries.

National diversity is the basic principle in staffing the units where officials sit and share coffee machines and responsibility for specific tasks. National diversity ensures that when a proposal is being evaluated there will be people from Northern and Southern Europe, and from Eastern and Western Europe, each of whom is free to call attention to points especially pertinent to their region or country on the basis of their knowledge of national institutions, knowledge that often requires knowledge of the national language. In the words of one Commission official, 'You need mixed teams, you need mixed skills, you need mixed cultural bases to come to the best outcomes' (Kassim et al., 2013: 50). Citizens of a country are able to assess weak points in a national case as well as strong points.

*If you ask a young brilliant Polish student who has just joined the Commission to attack the Polish government on some state aid dossier, you will find them eager to do so, and they're very good at it. (Quoted in Kassim et al., 2013: 51).*

The diversity of people involved in any decision-making committee ensures that any argument to take a single country's situation into account must be supported with reasons that can be acceptable to colleagues from other parts of Europe too. When the work of a DG unit is technical, and this is often the case, then the starting point for evaluation is not nationality but a shared body of knowledge, whether legal, environmental or scientific (Haas, 1992). This may encourage consensus in the harder sciences, while encouraging divisions in economic affairs, where there are differences of opinion

among economists within as well as across countries about how to deal with such issues as public sector deficits, reducing unemployment and promoting economic growth.

Becoming a Commission official does not affect an individual's national citizenship, but it does have a strong de-nationalizing effect on how policies are discussed within the Commission. Whereas people working in a multi-national corporation are part of a single organization with common goals, in the Commission the definition of goals for each DG is a matter of political debate between governments and interests spread across the Continent. New recruits undergo intensive socialization in the norms and activities appropriate to working in a multi-national European environment. For officials from less populous member states such as Portugal there is a high likelihood that in most meetings no one else in the room will know their country's language and laws. The denationalizing effect of working in a multi-national environment is direct and continuing. To succeed in the Commission post, an individual, whatever his or her nationality, must adapt to this environment. The formal loyalty to supra-national values and interests is re-enforced by the daily necessity of thinking in a framework very different from that of national politics. In the words of one official:

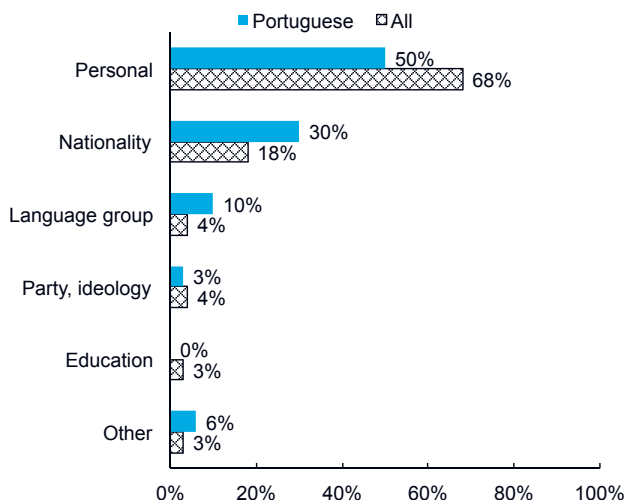
*One of the best things about the Commission is working in this intercultural environment. It's fantastic. You forget nationality a lot of the time and this is brilliant (quoted in Kassim, 2013: 49).*

Daily engagement with colleagues at work builds strong informal ties within a DG (Christiansen and Neuhold, 2013). When the EUCIQ survey asked officials how they first made informal contact with other people in their network, more than four-fifths replied that it is based on professional contacts made in the course of their work. Less than 10 percent mention nationality as a relevant factor and fewer still refer to a common education or party affiliation (Kassim et al., 2013: 86). What is true for Commission staff as a whole is also true for Portuguese.

Many issues within a unit affect other DGs, each of which is responsible for some measures required to arrive at an effec-

tive EU policy. Building alliances with other affected DGs is important in order to craft a policy that will be acceptable to the Council and the European Parliament. Personal contacts with other Commission officials are the primary means of building networks. Two-thirds of Commission staff rely most on personal contacts as do half of Portuguese interviewed in the EUCIQ survey (Figure 1.7). By contrast, only 18 percent of Commission officials used nationality as the basis for networking compared to 30 percent of Portuguese. The difference may reflect the disproportionate number of Portuguese currently in decision-making posts. Belonging to a language group common to several countries, such as French, facilitates networking; it is found useful by one-tenth of Commission staff. Since no other member state speaks Portuguese, this type of link is of little use to Portuguese.

Figure 1.7 Sources of Informal Commission Networks



Only 18 percent of Commission officials used nationality as the basis for networking compared to 30 percent of Portuguese

Source: EUCIQ Responses estimated from graphic in Kassim et al, p.85

Whatever the nationality of a Commission official, be it Portuguese or German, it is necessary to secure agreement within a multi-national unit and endorsement at each stage of a multi-stage review within a DG and between DGs

(Falkner, 2012). This ensures that a policy cannot be stated in terms of the national interest of any official drafting it. Instead, it must be stated in terms of a broader interest, whether pragmatic, European or both. As an official interviewed in the EUCIQ project declared, 'If European citizens exist at all, they exist here' (Kassim et al., 2013: 49).



## PORTUGUESE CIVIL SERVANTS IN BRUSSELS

Whereas the Commission recruits Portuguese to serve as supra-national civil servants, the EU's intergovernmental institutions give national civil servants the opportunity to represent their government in the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER). National officials also act as national representatives in the many intergovernmental working parties that consider Commission proposals that must be endorsed and implemented by the governments of member states (Blom-Hansen, 2011). In addition, national officials can hold posts in Commission DGs on a temporary basis (Trondal, 2010). Decisions about which Portuguese participate in these EU meetings are taken by the Portuguese government. In accord with the EU principle of the juridical equality of all member states, differences in population do not create major disparities between countries in the number of officials participating in EU intergovernmental discussions.

*The Permanent Representative's (PERMREP) Office.* The primary tasks of Portugal's PERMREP's Office are to monitor policy proposals under discussions within a DG; to work with likeminded governments to alter proposals to suit Portuguese interests better; and to ensure that decisions taken in principle at the EU level can be implemented without difficulty by Portuguese institutions (see Rose and Trechsel, 2013). The organization of each PERMREP's Office is in the hands of the national government. At the top of the Portuguese Office is the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative, Domingos Fezas Vital. He represents the government in COREPER II, which deals with politically contentious issues likely to require the attention of ministers in Lisbon and other national capitals. His deputy, Pedro Costa Pereira, also of Ambassador rank, deals with the much larger volume of measures in COREPER that require scrutiny by national officials but do not involve political issues of concern to ministers. Graça Mira Gomes, the third ranking official, represents Portugal

in the Political and Security Committee. When a Portuguese minister comes to an EU meeting to deal with political issues in the multi-national Council, he or she relies on PERMREP officials for information and political intelligence about the positions of ministers from other countries with whom they must deal.

Table 2.1 Staffing of Portuguese Permrep Office

<i>Economy</i> (23)	Economic and Financial Affairs, 6. Industrial Policy, Energy and Internal Market, 4. Agriculture and Fisheries, 4. Environment, 3. Information and Communications Technology, 2. Transport and Communications, 2. Regional policy, 1. Research and Space, 1
<i>International affairs</i> (13)	External Relations, 7. Foreign and Security Policy, 5. External Assistance, 1
<i>Justice</i> (9)	Justice and Home Affairs, 7. Legal Affairs, 2
<i>Social welfare</i> (5)	Employment and Social Affairs, 2. Culture and Education, 2. Health, 1
<i>EU institutions</i> (4)	COREPER Coordination, 2. Relations with European Parliament, 1. Portuguese in EU institutions, 1
<i>PERMREP Services</i> (28)	Portuguese Outermost Regions, 2. Press and Information, 1. Administration, 4. Secretariat, 18. Informatics, 2. Protocol, 1

Source: [www.missaoportugal.mne.pt](http://www.missaoportugal.mne.pt)

Since PERMREP officials react to proposals that the Commission has a monopoly right to prepare, the size of the Office staff is small by comparison with that of DGs and smaller still by comparison with ministries in Lisbon. The whole range of EU policies are monitored by about 60 professionals; in addition, about 30 provide secretarial and administrative support (Table 2.1). The staff are normally mid-career; the age of most is in their forties. The gender balance is slightly more equal than for Portuguese in the European Commission: there are five men for four women among the PERMREP professionals. Since each state has equal representation in each EU committee of COREPER, while more populous states have larger Offices, they are not large in proportion to their population. The size of the German PERMREP's Office, for example, is about twice that of Portugal.

Up to nine-tenths of proposals coming from DGs are deemed not politically contentious and reviewed by PERMREP staff without reference to ministers (Häge, 2013: 22ff). Collectively, Commission proposals cover many different fields of public policy and differ in the specialised attention that they require. This dispersion results in the responsibility of the Portuguese PERMREP's Office being divided into two dozen units that tend to shadow the output of particular DGs (Table 2.1). Portuguese in each unit attend relevant Working Parties of COREPER along with officials from 27 other national PERMREP Offices. While each country's representative is free to speak, the size of meetings and the need for multi-national consensus means that much of the role of a Portuguese official at such meetings is to listen and evaluate views emerging that are likely to form the group's consensus. It can accept views expressed by other national officials as long as they are in accord with Portuguese views. If problems are created, the priority is to see if compromises can be negotiated (see Häge, 2013: chapters 9-11).

Most PERMREP staff concentrate on three areas in which the EU is specially active, the economy, international affairs, and justice and related home affairs (Table 2.1). The reach of multi-level governance from Brussels to remote national regions is shown by two PERMREP officials monitoring how what is done there affects Madeira and the Azores. The contrast between the priorities of the EU and of national governments is illustrated by the coverage given policy areas to which the subsidiarity principle applies. Portugal has only two officials monitoring Employment and Social Affairs and two monitoring Education and Culture, and one covering health. These are the policy areas that account for a large portion of the government's public expenditure.

Many proposals that DGs put forward require specialist knowledge to evaluate. This is more often found in national ministries that deal with issues such as agriculture or the environment than in the ministry of foreign affairs (Jalali, 2012). Hence, the staff in the PERMREP's Office combines an almost equal number of people seconded from the national civil service and career diplomats. When the need arises for specialist skills in a field such as energy, a

qualified individual may even be recruited from outside the Portuguese public service. Since it takes time for officials new to Brussels to learn how it works and adjust to its distinctive multi-national approach, officials assigned to the PERMREP's Office are expected to be there for a minimum of three years and most remain for up to six years.

A typical example of how technical issues and diplomatic negotiations are required is the agreement of amendments to the Geographical Indications Regulation, an EU measuring originally adopted in 1992 to protect the use of geographical labels, such as Parma Ham or Burgundy wine, in goods marketed in the Single Europe Market, (see Häge, 2013: 104f-113). The Commission sent proposed amendments to COREPER in March, 2002. These proposals were assigned to its Special Committee on Agriculture, and then to a Working Party. Portugal and France wanted sea salt covered, but the Commission objected that this was not an agricultural product; they also wanted wool fibre and wicker covered. When Italy raised demands to make regionally protected goods packaged outside the region abandon the use of its name, Portugal supported this move along with France and Spain. More than a dozen formal meetings followed involving the Commission and the European Parliament as well as representatives of national PERMREPs Offices. By working with representatives of other countries sharing a common objection to proposed amendments, demands were met such as restrictions on packaging goods outside a specially recognised region of origin. Thirteen months after the process started, an agreed proposal was formally endorsed by ministers as an agenda item of the Agriculture and Fishers Council.

When tours of duty in Brussels end, the European political capital that Portuguese officials acquire by working in Brussels is circulated within the public service as they are re-assigned elsewhere. Diplomats go to a job in another country or continent or are re-assigned to the ministry of foreign affairs in Lisbon. Civil servants who have come from domestic ministries normally return to the same ministry, where they can spread the knowledge gained of how EU institutions deal with issues affecting their ministry.

Cumulatively, this creates a pool of well over one hundred officials dispersed in the Portuguese public service and able to brief the larger number who have not, or not yet, worked in Brussels.

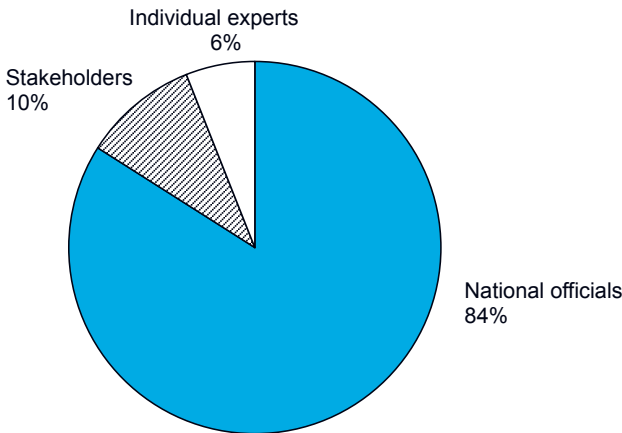
The unitary rather than federal character of the Portuguese state and the absence of coalition governments as in Benelux countries allows the Portuguese PERMREP's Office to concentrate on shadowing the policy process in Brussels. By contrast, the federal, corporatist and grand coalition structure of the Austrian government produces a different form of organisation. Many of the basic units in its PERMREP's Office are links to Federal Ministries in Vienna rather than to DGs in Brussels. Moreover, Austria not only makes provision for linking with the federal Länder but also with confederations of local authorities; chambers of commerce, labour and agriculture; trade unions, industries, and the national bank. Hungary, like Portugal a state with a relatively simple institutional structure, organizes its Office into fewer units, each of which shadows more DGs. The combination of fewer units and up to half a dozen staff in each makes it easier for Hungarians to share knowledge about what is happening in different DGs and to have a mixture of diplomatic and ministry staff dealing with negotiations about issues that are both politically and technically complex.

*Expanding the participation of Portuguese in the intergovernmental policy process.*

While the Commission has a monopoly on proposing policies, to become effective most require implementation by national governments with differing legal systems and administrative structures. Because all national considerations cannot be fully represented within the small DG units preparing measures, the Commission engages in continuing discussions with *Expert Groups* (see e.g. Christiansen and Larsson, 2007; Blom-Hansen, 2011). There are currently more than 500 permanent Groups and more than 350 temporary Groups. They tend to be linked with policies of a limited number of DGs, such as Taxation and Customs, Statistics, Enterprise, and Health and Consumer Affairs.

The bulk of the members of Expert Groups are national civil servants nominated by their ministry. The EU Register of Expert Group membership showed that in 2012 Expert Groups had more than 700 Portuguese participating in deliberations with Commission officials about policies (Figure 2.1). As long as Groups are constituted exclusively of national officials, then the EU norm of the equal representation of member states applies. There is little numerical difference between the 610 Portuguese officials and the 646 Italian and 677 German officials participating in Expert Groups or the 632 Austrian officials and the 602 Irish officials.

Figure 2.1 Portuguese Members of Expert Groups



In 2012 Expert Groups had more than 700 Portuguese participating in deliberations with Commission officials about policies

Source: Compiled by the authors from EC register of Expert Groups

Expert Groups can have members who represent stakeholder interests without regard to nationality. Stakeholder interests include business associations, trade unions and agricultural associations. Typically, interest group representatives participate in deliberations about the single European market. One in ten Portuguese participating in Expert Groups does so as an interested stakeholder. However, representation of interests without regard to nationality favours participation by individuals from the most populous EU states. For example, almost 11 percent are German and 9 percent British compared to 3.4 percent Portuguese, a small propor-

tion but large in proportion to the country's share of the EU's population. Insofar as business, trade union and civil society stakeholder organizations express sectoral interests found in many countries, Portuguese economic interests may be virtually represented by stakeholders based in other EU countries.

Paradoxically, Expert Groups have few members who sit as individuals by virtue of their specific expertise in the field in which EU action is being proposed. Those appointed because of their personal expertise constitute only 6 percent of the Portuguese participants (Figure 2.1). Individual experts can come from any member state, and Portuguese experts on VAT as well as fisheries take part in EU consultations. Here too the population of a country makes a difference. Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy each contribute 10 percent of individual experts, whereas Portuguese are only 2.3 percent of that total. Having citizens participate as experts confers less of a national advantage on a government insofar as individual experts are cosmopolitan professionals in fields such as food biology or geriatrics, and have views reflecting a body of knowledge shared internationally by professionals in their field (Haas, 1992). When I asked a Portuguese economist how his work in Brussels differed from what he would do in Lisbon, the reply was, 'It's much the same. Once a monetary economist, always a monetary economist'.

### *Seconded National Experts (SNEs).*

National governments are also able to nominate a select number of their officials to serve for a minimum of six months and a maximum of four years in a Commission DG or similar policy post to gain European political capital. Confusingly, they are known as *Seconded National Experts* (SNEs). This facility offers the Portuguese government the opportunity to create a cadre of mid-career officials who have an inside view of how EU institutions make policies. Their knowledge thus complements that of PERMREP officials who learn how intergovernmental institutions review what the Commission proposes. Seconded National Experts bring their European political capital with them when returning to a ministry post in Lisbon.

To become an SNE, an official must have at least three years of experience working in a public service post at a level equivalent to the EC's administrative grade and the endorsement of his or her national government. When very special skills are required, for example, in scientific research, recruits may come from other institutions. DGs advertise the posts to which they want to appoint SNEs and look to the 28 PERMREPs Offices in Brussels to encourage candidates. If a national official is seconded to the Commission, the national employer continues to pay the appointee's salary, which the Commission supplements to meet extra costs of living temporarily in Brussels ([http://ec.europa.eu/civil\\_service/job/sne](http://ec.europa.eu/civil_service/job/sne)).

DGs can recruit national experts on a short-term basis in order to gain staff with specialist knowledge of a problem of concern to the DG. For example, following the eurozone crisis the Commission created a Support Group for Portugal to monitor compliance with EU conditions for providing financial aid. It advertised a one-year post for a seconded national expert familiar with both the Portuguese economy and the EU's DG for Economic and Financial Affairs and the DG for Tax. Knowledge of Portuguese was described as an asset but not a requirement. Knowing how the Commission operates was the greater requirement. The staff of the European External Action Service (EEAS) was able to begin operation without the delays of recruiting all the personnel needed to staff it by having many mid-career national diplomats seconded to it. In this way national governments could, in the words of a Portuguese minister of foreign affairs, be represented within it. In particular, the Portuguese government expressed an interest that was given some recognition in heading EEAS delegations in areas of Africa and Latin America with which its history gave it claims to expertise. However, the former Secretary of State for European Affairs, Pedro Lourtie, emphasized that he was not claiming to own these posts or play a mathematical game, by establishing quotas but to combine national and EU interests (as quoted by Seabra, 2012: 38). The priority given to supra-national commitments is illustrated by the career of a senior EC civil



servant, João Vale de Almeida, being the Ambassador in Washington of the European Union as a whole.

Seconded national experts work on problems similar to those faced by their national ministry, but look at them from a multi-national perspective. Instead of having fellow citizens as colleagues, they are continuously engaged with a multi-national mixture of colleagues and work in a foreign language. Insofar as seconded staff have a professional expertise that is independent of citizenship, they can share this with others in their DG or the Commission. Direct contact is rare with the Council, where ministers of all national governments, including Portugal, meet. When SNEs have contact with national officials, they usually represent other member states rather than Portugal. The EC also has rules designed to avoid putting seconded national officials in a position in which there could be any conflict of interest between their current supra-national obligations and their long-term national career (Trondal, 2010: 67). The independence of seconded officials from national considerations is confirmed by national officials who attend intergovernmental committee meetings in which DG staff participate (Egeberg et al., 2003: 34).

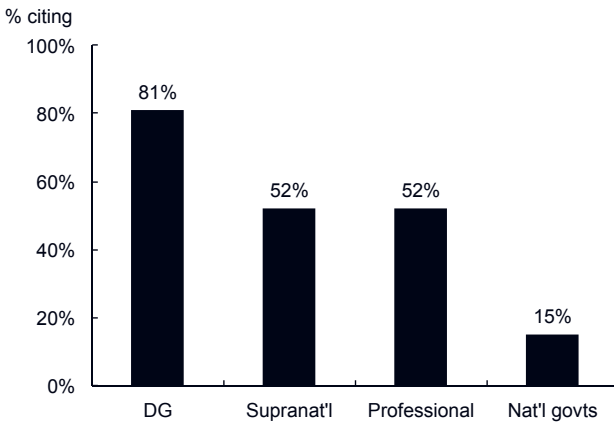
Like permanent Commission officials, the main task of seconded national experts is to work on dossiers that are the responsibility of their particular unit within a DG. Instead of an abstract idealistic commitment to an ever closer Union, Four-fifths of SNEs surveyed by Trondal emphasized the importance of their DG's position in making decisions about the content of a dossier (Figure 2.2). Departmental priorities are not seen as European priorities but as interests distinctive from other DGs. Paradoxically, commitment to a particular DG makes people conscious of divisions at the highest levels of the European Union. In the words of one seconded expert, The level of conflict between DGs is higher than between ministries at home (Trondal, 2010: 69).

By working in Brussels, seconded Portuguese officials gain European political capital. The change from working in a national ministry to a multi-national DG quickly socializes officials into a pragmatic understanding of how the

European Commission works. Instead of viewing an issue in terms of their national government, SNEs adopt the perspective of their DG (Trondal, 2010: 71). The common basis for discussion within a multi-national group tends to be shared professional values rather than a vague European identity (cf. Trondal, 2010: 71). This is not so much a reflection of seconded officials being ideologically committed to an ever closer Union. It is a practical reflection of the need for officials to give priority to where they are currently sitting and maintain agreement with people they are sitting next to.

Being socialized into how EU institutions work does not cause officials to lose their national political capital. Instead, people who are quick to adopt the novel methods of working in Brussels have demonstrated their ability to be quickly re-socialized when they return to work for the Portuguese government. In the words of one official seconded to Brussels, ‘I am loyal to the Commission, but at the end of the day my home organisation is my employer’.

Figure 2.2 Influences on Seconded National Experts



Four-fifths of SNEs surveyed by Trondal emphasized the importance of their DG's position in making decisions about the content of a dossier

Source: Jarle Trondal, *An Emergent European Executive Order*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2010), 69.

## PORTUGUESE WORKING IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Everyone who works in the European Parliament (EP) needs a large stock of political capital with a capital P, that is, knowledge of politics at the EU level and knowledge of the politics of diverse countries that the MEPs they deal with represent. Whereas European Commission staff must understand the outlook of the national ministers who decide the fate of their proposals in Council, EP staff must understand the outlook of a multi-national and multi-party assembly of elected politicians. While the 751 MEPs are the most visible part of the Parliament, they are only one-eighth of the total number of people working in the European Parliament (Corbett et al., 2011). The number of Portuguese working for the Parliament is 16 times greater than Portugal's 22 MEPs.

Even though the total number of MEPs is more than four times that of the Portuguese Parliament, there is a much higher ratio of population to representative than is normal in member states. It is one MEP for every 665,000 Europeans. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have a unique status in the European Union. They are party politicians nationally elected for a fixed-term of five years rather than being given a permanent post in the Commission after engaging in a multi-national *concours*. The largest group of EP staff is the Secretariat, a multi-national civil service responsible for administering the EP's collective work. Unlike MEPs, the Secretariat staff hold permanent posts. Individual MEPs have the right to employ at least two staff to assist them in their parliamentary work and support them in their national constituency. The partisan staff working on limited-term contracts for EP Party Groups is larger than the total number of MEPs. Jobs of MEPs, their staff and their Party Group depend on the outcome of the quinquennial election of the European Parliament. Thus, there is a regular circulation in and out of the EP of people with a substantial amount of political capital that can be applied back home or in non-governmental organizations or political lobbies in Brussels.

Table 3.1 PORTUGUESE IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT STAFF

	Total Staff	
	N	% / Thus
Belgium	821	14.0
France	684	11.7
Italy	537	9.2
Spain	412	7.0
Germany	390	6.7
PORTUGAL	249	4.2
Poland	229	3.9
GB	223	3.8
Greece	225	3.8
Finland	181	3.1
Romania	163	2.8
Hungary	151	2.6
Denmark	136	2.3
Netherlands	137	2.3
Bulgaria	131	2.2
Sweden	127	2.2
Czech Rep	125	2.1
Slovakia	117	2.0
Lithuania	105	1.8
Luxembourg	106	1.8
Slovenia	101	1.7
Estonia	95	1.6
Ireland	91	1.6
Latvia	95	1.6
Non-EU	85	1.5
Malta	68	1.2
Austria	63	1.1
Cyprus	15	0.3

Portugal comes sixth in the absolute number of staff employed in the EP.

Source: European Parliament. Data for 2012.

**Secretariat.** The EP's Secretariat is much larger than that of the national parliament of a member state. At the end of 2012 the Secretariat had a career civil service of 6,694 individu-

als. Because MEPs come from 28 countries and work in two dozen different languages, linguists and translators account for more than one-fifth of EP employees.<sup>2</sup> The staff has grown in size over the decades with the increased powers of the EU Parliament and the enlargement of the Union. When the first Parliament was directly elected in 1979 in an EU of nine member states, there were 1,995 employees. By 1984, two years after Portugal joined, the EU had increased to 12 member states and the Parliament's staff to 2,966. Since then, the number of member states has more than doubled, but the number of MEPs has increased by little more than half. Concurrently, the growing importance of the Parliament in the co-decision process of the EU and the expansion of EU powers has more than doubled the size of its staff.

The division of EP staff by nationality reflects history, economics and politics. The three most numerous nationalities are from the six founder members of the EU: Belgium, France, and Italy (Table 3.1). Germany is much under-represented, reflecting the attractive level of salaries and employment opportunities within Germany. For a complementary reason, Spaniards are over-represented. Portugal comes sixth in the absolute number of staff employed in the EP. Discounting the exceptional circumstances of Belgium, it ranks first among the not so populous EU member states. Moreover, notwithstanding the United Kingdom having a population six times greater than Portugal, fewer British are EP staff.

The staff of the European Parliament is divided into two categories: 44 percent are administrators dealing with politicians and political issues while the majority are assistants providing more or less routine services. Portuguese staff come seventh in the percentage of citizens who are in higher-ranking administrative posts. In age, an important consideration in a civil service system where seniority is relevant for promotion, the average Portuguese staff member is 50, placing it sixth among all nationalities; only one other early entrant to the EU has greater seniority. By contrast with the Commission, where a majority of Portuguese staff are men,

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2. All statistics about EP staffing come from official European Parliament sources.

in the EP Portuguese women outnumber men by a ratio of three to two. This pre-eminence applies in the higher grades of the Administrative section as well as among assistants.

Low turnover among civil servants makes recruitment to posts in the European Parliament a highly competitive process in which only a fraction of 1 percent of applicants are successful. In 2012 a total of 57,080 people applied for a post in the European Parliament. In keeping with the shortage of jobs for young graduates, 3,914 applicants were Portuguese, more than three times its share of the EU's population. The large number of Portuguese seeking a post helped the country to rank seventh among 28 countries in the number of successful applicants for EP posts, one notch above the United Kingdom. However, in quantitative terms this achievement is limited, since only 11 Portuguese gained posts, barely one-quarter of 1 percent of those who applied (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Portuguese Recruited to EP Staff, 2012

	Total Recruits		% EU Pop'n
	N	%	
Belgium	34	15.0	2.2
France	25	11.0	13.0
Spain	22	9.7	9.2
Italy	21	9.2	12.1
Germany	17	7.5	16.3
Romania	17	7.5	4.3
PORTUGAL	11	4.8	2.1
GB	10	4.4	12.5
Other 19 countries	70	30.1	

Source: European Parliament. Data for 2012.

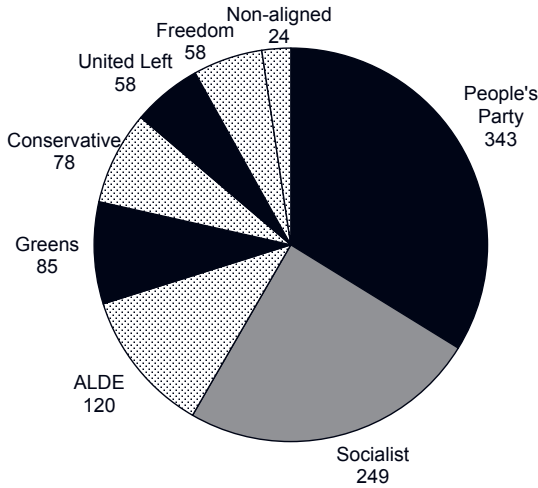
Because the EP requires an absolute majority of MEPs to endorse legislation, its committees have MEPs from every member state. This results in EP staff mixing on a daily basis with an even wider range of nationalities than are normally found within a DG unit. It also means that Portuguese on

the staff of the EP will have limited contact with Portuguese MEPs. Staff who service the policy needs of specific EP committees tend to give priority to subject-matter concerns and to the views of the Commission DG that produces inputs to the committee for which they work. They also must pay attention to balancing the partisan concerns of the major multi-national Party Groups (cf. Winzen, 2011). When a sample of EP career staff was asked to evaluate the weight given to the views of different groups, national governments came seventh on a list of nine (Egebert et al., 2012: Table 7).

The European Parliament annually offers five-month stagiaire (traineeship) posts to Europeans in their mid-20s who want to gain some experience of working in an EU institution. Some stagiaires, for example, law students or graduates, translate draft legislative proposals and documents from French or English into legal terms in their national language. In doing so they may identify ambiguities or inconsistencies in the application of EP legislation within different national legal contexts. Some work for committees where there is an emphasis on achieving a cross-party consensus. Others work for individual MPs, where they are immediately asked to assist in all sorts of tasks that make up a politician's day, from finding information relevant to a pending committee meeting to making a restaurant booking or dealing with a troubled constituent. Although stagiaires arrive in Brussels inexperienced, their work and abilities enable them to acquire significant European political capital useful when subsequently seeking and settling into a career.

The competition for EP stagiaire posts is fierce, and has been exacerbated by the difficulty that young graduates now face in finding employment. In 2012 there were 14,064 applicants for 619 posts. In 2013 the number of applicants increased by almost half to 20,352, while the number selected for posts increased by only seven. In the first of these years the number of successful Portuguese, 14, was almost exactly in keeping with Portugal's share of the EU's population. In 2013 the number of successful Portuguese increased significantly to 22, but this was still only 3.2 percent of the total number of stagiaire recruits.

Figure 3.1 Staffing of EP Party Groups



Source: European Parliament. Data for 2012.

**Party Groups.** Seven multi-national Party Groups play a crucial role in organizing the political work of the European Parliament by co-ordinating activities of MEPs sharing a particular political tendance but representing up to 28 different national constituencies. About one thousand administrative staff and assistants are employed by the Groups and paid by the Parliament. The size of each Group's staff is arrived at by a complex formula that provides a minimum for each Group and also takes into account how many MEPs it has (Figure 3.1). In addition, each Group usually has a number of permanent civil servants seconded to it to provide technical assistance and to give civil servants first hand experience of how Party Groups mobilize their influence in the EU's co-decision process. Each Group is also free to recruit a small number of stagiaires. The People's Party Group offers ten such positions for three months to young people who meet its selection criteria, renewable once for an additional three months. The Socialists offer 25 stagiaire posts for up to five months.

The bulk of each Group's staff are not permanent civil servants but employed on contracts of an indeterminate period. This condition recognises that the size of the Group,



and therefore its staff, can vary with each EP election and from time to time Groups split or merge. Staff are expected to be in sympathy with the Group's political position. Up to a point recruitment is through the same process as jobs in the Secretariat and Commission: there are both written and oral tests, including knowledge of the main working languages of the Group. Choice of successful candidates is made by the Group rather than by the EP's DG for Personnel, but they are normally paid by funds allocated in the EP budget.

Portugal's 22 MEPs are divided among four Groups, the European People's Party, the Socialists and Democrats, the Greens-Free Alliance, and the United Left (Trechsel et al., 2013). Together, these four groups account for 72 percent of the total Group staff. However, since Portuguese MEPs are relatively few, collectively they contribute only 21 staff, 2.2 percent of the total employed by EP Group. Since each Group has MEPs from many countries, Portuguese staff work in a multi-national Group and prepare reports in French or English for scrutiny by fellow partisans from other countries. In this way, Portuguese who have been accustomed to thinking of party politics in national terms are socialized to see the broader European implications of issues of left, right and green politics.

Each Group's staff concentrates on topics on the EP's current agenda and addresses them in keeping with its partisan outlook. Staff tasks include providing briefs for members; publicity to be circulated through old and new media; and logistical and practical support for the Group's activities and its Bureau of leaders. Doing so not only requires skill in foreign languages but also skill in handling MEPs who, notwithstanding a common partisan outlook, differ in their political priorities and individual personalities (Corbett et al., 2011: chapter 3; [www.europarl.europa.eu /aboutparliament](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament)). When asked to evaluate nine different influences on their views, Party Group staff ranked national governments fifth (Egeberg et al., 2012: Table 7).

***Staff of Portuguese MEPs.*** Each MEP can employ Accredited Parliamentary Assistants (APAs) based in Brussels and nationally based assistants to support their work at the EU

level and to maintain links with the national constituency from which they are elected. Given individual differences in the kind of help that MEPs want, hiring is at their discretion. However, terms of employment are set by EP regulations and each MEP receives a fixed sum to employ their assistants. In November, 2013 there were 1,761 Accredited Assistants working in the offices of MEPs in Brussels, an increase of 29 percent since 2009. A significant minority of MEPs hire assistants of different nationalities in order to facilitate liaising with multi-national colleagues. Portuguese MEPs employ a total of 66 APAs, an average of three per MEP.

The funds that the Parliament provides individual MEPs can also be used to hire assistants within their country. In Portugal, where MEPs are elected from a single nationwide constituency, local assistants are often located in a city in which the MEP has established his or her political network, a network that can be personally useful when their term in the EP ends. In total the EP finances 1645 local assistants who are recruited by individual MEPs in the light of their particular priorities.

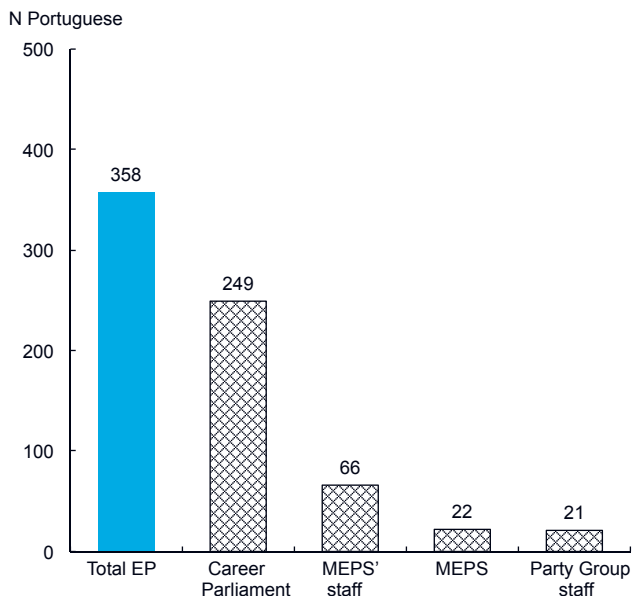
Portuguese MEPs differ in the staffing arrangements that they choose to make. On the one hand, Paulo Rangel reports five accredited staff working for him in his Brussels office. Edite Estrela, Joao Ferreira, Diogo Feio and Joao de Melo each report four and de Melo also has a local assistant working in Portugal. On the other hand, six Portuguese MEPs do not report employing any staff to work solely for themselves and five list only local assistants. The accredited assistants hired by MEPs are almost all Portuguese. This increases their usefulness in maintaining links with the national party that nominated them and with their Portuguese constituents. However, it reduces their capacity to contribute to cross-national networks essential in building coalitions of individuals to secure committee or Group endorsement of a measure.

All in all, the European Parliament gives its staff a distinctive form of European Political Capital. They must understand the significance of party political differences relevant at the EU level, a knowledge that Commission staff can only

acquire at second hand. Working in the Parliament makes individuals aware of the need for multi-national agreement, an experience shared by staff in the PERMREP's Office. However, EP staff normally evaluate policies in terms of multi-national partisan outlooks. In other words, a Portuguese Socialist is expected to think of the interests of workers in all member states and not just one nation's workers.

Collectively, the 358 Portuguese working in the European Parliament are almost as numerous as the 384 Portuguese working at the policymaking level of the European Commission

Figure 3.2 Portuguese in EP Posts



Source: European Parliament.

Collectively, the 358 Portuguese working in the European Parliament are almost as numerous as the 384 Portuguese working at the policymaking level of the European Commission (Figure 3.2). Both categories of staff work in a multi-national environment that ensures that they have European Political Capital. Whereas Commission staff are all civil servants, almost one-third of the EP's staff are employed by elected politicians and are expected to view policies in terms of partisan interests and question DG proposals that do not match the political line of the Party Group.

The contribution that EP staff make to Portugal's European Political Capital is multiplied by the fact that the duration of employment of about one hundred staff is only guaranteed for the five-year life of the Parliament. While one in twenty staff members in the Secretariat was a new recruit in 2011, up to one in five accredited parliament assistants was replacing an assistant who had left (C 164/16 Official Journal of the European Union 9.6.2012). In an election year about half of MEPs, including Portuguese, leave Parliament, forcing their staffs to find a new employer. Non-elected EP staff are youthful. Assistants of Party Groups and of MEPs have an average age of 32 and their indeterminate tenure is an incentive to look for a more secure job. Their European Political Capital is an asset in getting a job in which they can continue to make use of their capital in the interest of organizations in Portugal or elsewhere in Europe. Their youth means that they can do so for three decades or longer.

# IV

## INCREASING PORTUGAL'S EUROPEAN POLITICAL CAPITAL

Portugal has demonstrated that it has the human resources to be competitive in winning jobs in EU institutions. The preceding chapters have shown that, in relation to population, Portuguese are a disproportionate number of officials in the European Commission and have a disproportionate number of high-ranking positions (Figure 1.3) and the PERMREP's Office of the Portuguese government has diplomatic and domestic staff to monitor proposals from all of the EU's Directorate Generals (Table 2.1). There are also hundreds of Portuguese officials and experts participating in the intergovernmental committees that deal with technical problems of implementing EU policies (Figure 2.1). Furthermore, Portuguese hold a disproportionate number of posts in the European Parliament (Table 3.1).

In a European Union of 500 million people and 28 member states, Portuguese will always be a small portion of those holding jobs in its institutions. Moreover, structural changes in the EU are creating pressures to reduce the number of Portuguese working in EU institutions. Since Portugal joined the EU, enlargement has more than doubled the number of countries whose citizens can compete for EU posts and most of these countries have labour markets making EU posts especially attractive to their talented citizens. When Portuguese in senior posts retire in the next decade, there will be more mid-career staff from new member states to fill their posts than there are Portuguese. The 2008 economic crisis has not only encouraged able young Portuguese to look abroad for work but also young people in more populous high unemployment countries such as Spain and Italy. However, EU budget constraints threaten a reduction in the number of new recruits. To maintain its current presence in EU posts, Portuguese will have to do more.

Portugal benefits from the intergovernmental principle of the equal participation of all member states in the many institutionalized forms of deliberation that constitute the EU's co-decision process. Practical pressures limit the number of individuals participating in committee meetings, thus putting a ceiling on representatives from the most populous states. Since decisions require agreement by larger and smaller member states, the quality of contributions by individuals, independently of nationality, can have a significant influence on whatever consensus emerges. The more European political capital an individual has, the higher the quality of their contributions.

Portugal's pool of European political capital is not limited to posts held in EU institutions; it is a fungible asset. Once a person understands how the EU system works, this knowledge can be applied in an increasing number of contexts affected by Europeanisation (Ladrech, 2010). It can be used by national civil servants and party politicians whose work is affected by decisions taken at the EU as well as at national level. It can be used on behalf of private sector Portuguese enterprises affected by the Single Europe Market in which they must compete. Portuguese can also use this capital working for multi-national firms and as lobbyists for private sector firms or civil society organisations concerned with EU policies.

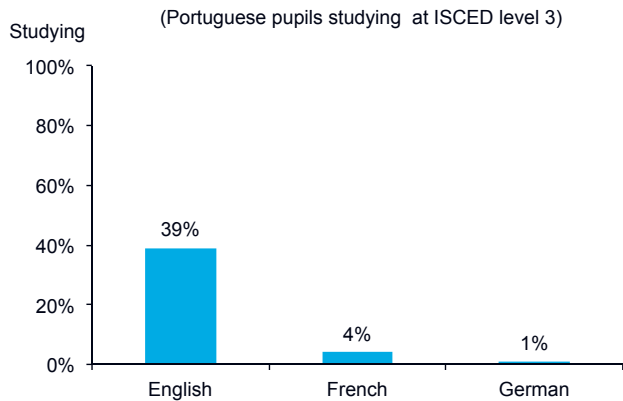
Increasing the pool of European political capital does not de-nationalize Portuguese. Instead, it adds to the capabilities of individuals who are both Portuguese and European citizens. Acquiring European political capital requires individual motivation and effort that the Portuguese government can promote through education, targeted support for citizens competing for European careers, and managing the careers of its existing civil servants. Many of these measures are desirable in themselves, because they enhance the opportunities of younger people whose careers will become increasingly Europeanised before they retire in the second half of the twenty-first century.

### *Education for European political capital.*

Education provides the foundation for developing European political capital. Whether a youth is a brilliant student or president of the youth wing of a political party, an individual must be a high achiever, for there is fierce competition for jobs in Brussels. Because Portuguese is not widely spoken in European deliberations, knowledge of foreign languages is essential for a European career. While adults are near the EU average in claiming knowledge of one foreign language, Portuguese are well below the European average in claiming knowledge of two or more foreign languages (Table 1.1).

Whereas most Europeans study English intensively as a foreign language, only two in five Portuguese do so at a level as high as the final stage of secondary education

Figure 4.1 Advanced Study of Major EU Languages



Source: EUROSTAT, Luxembourg, 2012. "Foreign Language Learning Statistics", in Statistics Explained.

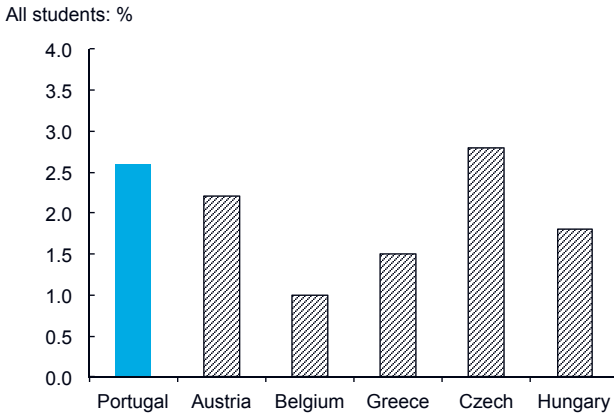
Current Portuguese policy about teaching foreign languages is lagging behind other EU member states. Portugal appears well below the European average in the percentage of secondary school pupils studying a major European language at a high enough level for further study or work abroad (Figure 4.1). Whereas most Europeans study English intensively as a foreign language, only two in five Portuguese do so at a level as high as the final stage of secondary education and less than one in twenty-five pursue a high standard of French (Figure 4.1). Achieving a high standard in German, the home language of more European citizens than is French,

is almost completely abandoned by able Portuguese youths. The policy implication is clear:

5. *To increase European political capital, the Portuguese Ministry of Education should increase the percentage of pupils learning two major European languages (e.g. English, French, German) to an advanced level.*

Given some knowledge of a foreign language, studying abroad creates European political capital in two complementary ways. It forces Portuguese to learn how to adapt to national institutions that differ from those they take for granted at home. In a foreign campus or café, young Portuguese will learn to engage with a multi-national group of people and begin to develop a personal network of European contacts. Both skills are necessary in order to work in EU institutions. Three-fifths of European Commission officials have studied abroad before subsequently going to work in Brussels.

Figure 4.2 Portuguese Students Using Erasmus to Go Abroad



Source: Erasmus, Facts, Figures & Trends, 2012. Luxembourg: Eurostat.

Portuguese students are above-average in their readiness to take advantage of the opportunities that the Erasmus programme offers to study abroad (Figure 4.2). The number with Erasmus placements in 2012 is one-fifth greater than would be expected if Portuguese took up Erasmus place-



ments in proportion to their share of the EU's population (Figure 4.2). The take up is also greater than countries such as Austria and Germany, where knowledge of two additional languages is greater than in Portugal. There has been a steady increase in the number of Portuguese students making use of Erasmus opportunities to study abroad. In 2000 almost 2600 went abroad for an average of one semester; by 2011 the number had doubled ([www.ec.europa/education/erasmus/stats/doc/1011/countries](http://www.ec.europa/education/erasmus/stats/doc/1011/countries)).

The countries that attract the most Portuguese Erasmus students appear to do so on the grounds of cultural proximity or cost. Spain and Italy, each a large and Mediterranean EU member, rank first and second. The third and fourth most popular countries, Poland and the Czech Republic, appear to attract students by being relatively cheap in terms of the cost of living and offering courses in English rather than requiring knowledge of a Slavic language. In the 2011-12 academic year, Germany was the fifth most popular country; the number of students going there was less than half that going to Poland. In the two preceding years, France had ranked fifth but the number of Portuguese going there was less than one-quarter that going to Spain. Given the financial barriers to Portuguese going to major Northern European countries:

6. *To increase knowledge of British, German and French society, the Portuguese Ministry of Education should offer competitive grants to supplement Erasmus awards in order to encourage more Portuguese students to study in high value, high cost European countries.*

#### ***Competing for EU posts.***

The disproportionate number of Portuguese currently holding senior posts in EU institutions means that there will be a significant drop in the number in high-ranking positions as those now there begin to retire in the coming years. Concurrently, the enlargement of the European Union has increased competition for entry and lowered the proportion of Portuguese at a level to be promoted to senior posts in the next decade.

In order to maintain the presence of Portuguese in EU institutions, the government needs to take active measures to help able young graduates to compete for posts, above and beyond the information and guidance that EPSOS offers to EU citizens of all nationalities. Education bursaries could underwrite competitive scholarships to study EU affairs at cosmopolitan institutions abroad and for those otherwise very well qualified, to gain a high standard of competence in two major European foreign languages. Experience in working in Brussels could be given by creating posts as stagiaires in Portugal's PERMREP Office. Portuguese organizations could be offered subsidies to employ able young persons as interns working on EU policy issues. The practical experience of working with other people on a problem of common concern and in a foreign language builds European political capital that is necessary for success in the final assessment deciding who does and who does not get an EU post.

*7. To assist young Portuguese wanting to compete for an EU job in the concours, the Portuguese government should offer special-purpose grants to raise language skills and give practical experience of working on European problems with Portuguese institutions.*

The very competitive nature of EU recruitment is such that most Portuguese who compete in the concours will not be offered an EU job. Yet the 'near misses', that is, Portuguese who are selected for the final round of assessments, are not failures. They still have the European political capital that brought them so close to a permanent supra-national career. This is an asset to themselves and to society, and should not be wasted. The finalists who are not offered posts are three times as numerous as Portuguese succeeding in the concours. Moreover, having lost the chance of working for a supra-national European organization, they are now free to use their political capital in working for a Portuguese institution.

Finalists who have just missed a post and want to take the concours a second time could be offered grants to improve their chances of success. Funding could be made available for temporary posts in Portuguese universities as a

researcher or temporary lecturer, where their knowledge could be used while looking for a longer-term career. Some finalists will already have a job that offers a career that can make use of their European capital. To avoid the unemployment of people who have a high degree of European knowledge, a Portuguese employer could be offered a subsidy to create a post for a year that could utilize their skill. The EU is not the only supra-national source of good jobs. The UN and its agencies, the World Bank, and dozens of other organizations to which Portugal belongs recruit staff without regard to nationality. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Portuguese government promotes a website that annually lists up to 4,000 posts in international organisations and in a twelve-month period has about 600,000 visits (see [www.carreirasinternacionais.eu](http://www.carreirasinternacionais.eu)) by many applicants, since the citizens eligible to apply are much more numerous.

8. *To encourage able Portuguese to have a career that makes use of their European political capital, the government should offer special purpose short-term grants to those who have sought but fallen short of getting a permanent EU post.*

Work for MEPs or Party Groups in the European Parliament is in the national as well as the European interest, since people are employed by politicians endorsed by a bloc of Portuguese voters. Since these jobs are vulnerable to the vagaries of election results, those holding them are floating fish in the pool of European political capital. They are also a fungible asset to Portuguese society. The European Parliament already finances a few posts to support the offices of Portuguese MEPs in Brussels and in Portugal and an EP office in Lisbon. The Portuguese government could, in consultation with national parties having representatives in the European Parliament, supplement this by funding short-term stagiaire posts to work with Portuguese MEPs in Brussels and contributing to the cost of maintaining easy access offices in Portuguese cities and regions beyond Lisbon. The fact that the posts would be filled by applying partisan as well as educational criteria would help give European political capital to Portuguese who are engaged in the political process but who lack a university degree.

### *Manpower planning for civil servants.*

Whereas making use of European educational opportunities and competing successfully for jobs in Brussels is in the hands of individuals, the Portuguese government has a major influence on the careers of its civil servants. It determines the criteria for recruiting civil servants; the experience that they gain by circulating between posts in the course of their career; and it takes decisions about the skills and experience required to secure promotion to high-level positions in government.

The European Union recruits civil servants on the basis of their level of general intelligence, specific knowledge and skills, and ability to work with others in a group. These skills are very useful to work as a national civil servant as well. The great majority of higher-level Portuguese civil servants should already have these skills, but however great their stock of national political capital (and it may be greater than that of many MPs), this does not ensure that they also have European political capital. To work in the ever closer Union that is increasing the interlocking responsibilities of Lisbon and Brussels requires more than a high level of general intelligence or the ability to pass a written examination in the law and institutions of the European Union. It first of all requires a good knowledge of English and French, the EU's working languages. It also requires the ability to work with a wide variety of nationalities in these languages, since there are many contexts in which the majority of people discussing an issue in Brussels are speaking in EFL (English as a Foreign Language; see Rose, 2008). When reviewing the qualifications of applicants for higher level posts, extra credit can be given to those applicants showing evidence of having one or both of these qualities.

*9. To increase the pool of Portuguese civil servants with European as well as national political capital, more weight should be given in recruiting staff to knowledge of EU working languages and experience of studying or working abroad.*

An additional way to increase the pool of European capital within Portuguese government would be to recruit

more people who have already established a career outside government. This could start by offering fast-track entry to the domestic civil service to finalists in the concours who have just missed gaining a permanent supranational post in Brussels. This recognises that people who are in the 98<sup>th</sup> or 99<sup>th</sup> percentile of applicants for a Brussels job (see Figure 1.3) are talented people and, by virtue of being in their 30s, have had relevant European experience that Portuguese entering the domestic civil service are not so likely to have. Portuguese who have worked abroad for several years in private enterprise, non-governmental organisations or academic positions, have accumulated political capital relevant to the challenges facing national government in a multi-level (and polyhedral) world (see Rose, 2013: chapter 8). Those who meet the general requirements for entry can be given extra credit for experience relevant to dealing with governments outside as well as within Portugal.

*10. To increase trans-national capabilities of Portuguese civil servants, fast-track recruitment should be developed that takes into account the value of people having already spent time working abroad.*

Those who rise in their jobs in the civil service without European political capital should be encouraged to acquire some. Ministries could make more use of the knowledge of officials who have worked in Brussels by asking those with European political capital to give talks or participate in training seminars for junior staff so they could gain vicarious experience of the EU policy process. Civil servants in post who have gaps in their European knowledge can be assigned to a Portuguese embassy in London, Paris, Berlin or elsewhere. This would not only upgrade linguistic skill but also political awareness of how policies taken for granted in Portugal look to other Europeans.

*11. Able civil servants already in post should be given experience in working in multi-national settings by assignments to Portuguese embassies abroad or secondment to jobs abroad working for Portuguese organisations.*

Since Portugal already has a core of officials with European political capital, the above recommendations imply incre-

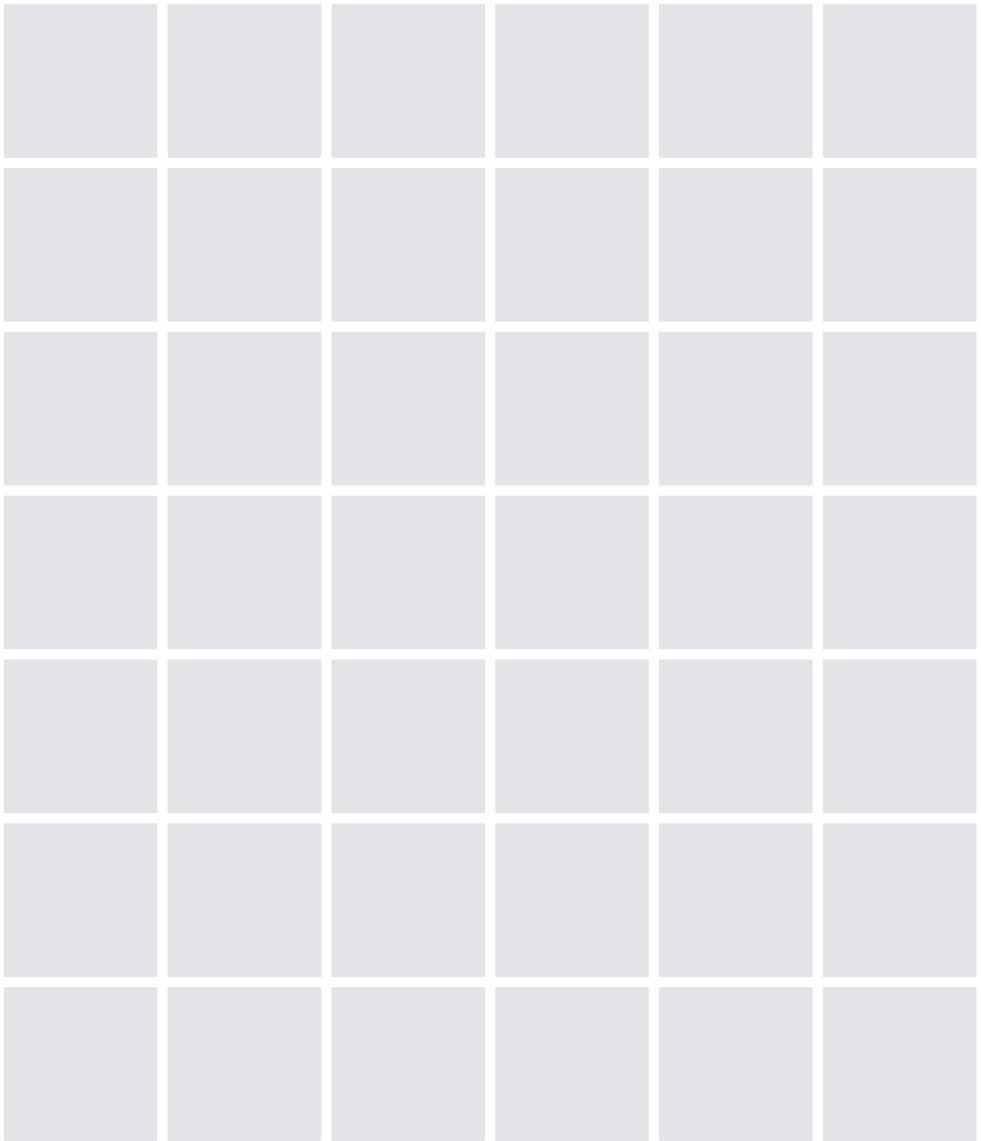
mentally increasing the pool available to the Portuguese government and Portuguese society. In any one year the cost of doing so is limited by the numbers involved. Some points raised, such as the criteria for choosing recruits for established posts, do not involve any additional expenditure. The current fiscal squeeze on the Portuguese government requires special justification for any new expenditure. Adding a corollary to the familiar saying 'Knowledge is power' provides such a justification: 'If you think education for dealing with European affairs is expensive, compare it to the cost of ignorance'.

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